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CHAPTER I

FIRST YEARS

IT is fortunate for the young Burman that on his first appearance in the world all attention is directed to the mother, and the "little stranger" is left very much to himself till he has attained a stronger vitality. Were it not so, the rival parties of the Dietists and Druggists might quarrel over the relative quantities of the four elements, fire, air, earth, and water, composing the new arrival, and diet and dose him out of existence immediately, in a heroic attempt to attain an equilibrium of forces. The mother indeed is the major point of interest in all countries, but childbirth nowhere entails such penalties as in Burma. Directly the child is born, the mother is rubbed all over with na-nwin (turmeric), and a big fire is lighted as near as the construction of the wooden or bamboo house permits, while rugs and blankets are heaped over her to the extent of the possessions of the family. As speedily as possible the midwife prepares a draught called se sein (green medicine), the composition of which is a tradition with the Wun-swès, and is kept a secret from inquisitive males. This the victim in bed has to drink perpetually during seven days, and for the same period, irrespective of the blankets and the time of year, is heated up with ôk pu. These are big circular or lozenge-shaped bricks. They are heated blazing hot in the wood fire, dropped for a few seconds into a pot full of water, and then wrapped up in cloths and applied to the body of the mother. In addition to this, doses of turmeric are regularly administered, and every now and then

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while nats, bilus, and compound animals called tiger-bilus are also frequent. Each representation is surrounded by a roughly oval tracery of a variety of letters of the alphabet, which form a curious and remarkably effective frame. Thus each animal has a setting of its own. Vacant spaces are filled up in a similar way, and the top and bottom are finished off with a scolloped line. Sometimes these letters are asserted to have a cabalistic meaning, but ordinarily no greater virtue is claimed for them than that of beauty. Mystic squares and ladder-step triangles of serious import are often added in vacant spaces, but all the more important and valid charms are reserved for other parts of the body and for special execution, usually too in vermilion. The old style, and that which prevails still in jungle districts, was to cover every available piece of skin with tracery, so that the figures became blurred and indistinct, and on a dark skin grown old were practically not visible without careful examination, which, considering the portion of the body, was embarrassing to both parties. The newer style, and that specially affected by those with a white skin, is to sacrifice mass of colour to distinctness of outline. The best sayās carry about sample-books with them containing clever drawings, from which the aspirant may select the patterns he likes best, and mark their relative positions before he takes the opium. But tigers, cats, monkeys, and bilus always predominate. To fill up space, and for greater certainty, the name of the animal is often added in the figure, after the style of juvenile art on slates, or with a piece of chalk on blank hoardings.

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The Shans tattoo even more extensively than the Burmans. The figures are carried down well over the calf of the leg and above the navel, while from the upper line tattooed rays run up to the chest and at the back, after the fashion of a rising sun, almost to the nape of the neck. Sometimes the retainers of the Sawbwas, or Shan chiefs, had every part of the body except the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet tattooed. Even the face was covered with the dark-blue markings. Mostly all the men who tattoo charms and cabalistic figures are Shans. They claim and are allowed a special skill in such matters, and as

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they mutter spells and incomprehensible incantations over the "medicine," are looked up to with profound belief and a very considerable deal of awe.

The tattooing on the loins and legs is universal with all Burmans, and nothing more is ordinarily required; but there are very few who have not charms of some kind tattooed on the arms, back, chest, or even on the top of the head, which is shaved for the purpose. These figures are of all kinds—lizards, birds, mystic words and squares, rings, images of the Buddha, and sometimes merely a few scattered dots, the latter especially on the face, between the eyes, over the ears, or on the chin. The colouring matter is almost always vermilion, with drugs and solutions, according to requirement, mingled with it. The blue dye from the lampblack never disappears, but the red colour of the vermilion gradually fades away and vanishes. Nevertheless figures of this kind, more or less distinct, are to be found on Burmans of all ages, so great is the national superstition. Even the town youths, whose limbs are smooth and "unbreeched" as a girl's, are never without some charms of this kind, if it is only the a-nu se, which enables a man to gain the woman he loves. This "drug of tenderness" is composed of vermilion mixed with a variety of herbs and curious things, prominent among which is the bruised, dry skin of the taukte, the trout-spotted gekko, whose sonorous cry and fidelity to the house where he establishes himself and brings luck, are well known to all who have visited Burma or Siam. It is very sparingly used, a few round spots arranged in the shape of a triangle being of sufficient virtue to ensure the object aimed at. The commonest place for them is between the eyes, but occasionally the se sayā recommends the lips, or even the tongue, and his advice is always followed. This is the only tattooing which women ever have executed on them, and there are not many of them who have it done. The patient is usually a love-sick maiden who is afraid the object of her affection will escape from her, or a girl whom rolling years warn that she must be quick if she would not be condemned to remain an a-pyo heing, an old maid. Except in very desperate cases, however, they always manage to persuade the operator to place the charm on some part of the

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body where it will not be visible. If it is not effectual, there is always open to them the signal afforded by kindly national custom to maidens longing for a mate. They cut off the lappets of hair, the bya-bazan, hanging over the ears, and the significance is the same as the white heather of the language of flowers, "heart for sale." In Rangoon the tattooing of a woman has a special signification, not recognised elsewhere. It means that she wants an Englishman for a husband. Poor thing!

Another very universal kind of tattooing is that with a-hpi se. Almost every schoolboy in the country has a specimen of this on him, for does it not prevent him from feeling the pain when he is caned? No amount of falsified hopes in the experience of friends will persuade him that it may not be effectual in his case, and a flogging is often courted as an immediate test of its efficacy. Pride repels the inquiries of chums as to the results, but the experimenter is usually very well behaved for some time. In the case of older men the a-hpi se acts as a talisman against bullets, sword cuts, and ills of that kind. Allied to this are the thenat hpi, which soldiers and dacoits carry about with them. These are the horns of buffaloes and other animals, which may be plain, but are usually elaborately carved with figures according to fancy. They must be quite solid down to the root. A hollow or flaw of any kind deprives them of their virtue. While the man has such a talisman in his hands he cannot be killed. A monkey is a very favourite image to have carved in this way on a sword or dagger hilt, the reference being to the tale of the Ramayana. Of a similar nature are talismans which are especially used by soldiers and dacoits. These hkaung-beit-set are charmed or consecrated objects let into the flesh under the skin. They are of various kinds. Some are gold, silver, or lead; others curious pebbles, pieces of tortoise-shell, or bits of horn, all of them with incantations of mystic character written on them. Many famed dacoits have long rows and curves of them over the chest, showing in little knobs through the skin. When they get into English prisons, an energetic jailer has been known to cut them out, lest they should be pieces of gold or silver, or perhaps precious stones, with which the turnkeys

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might be bribed. The usual result is to break the robber's spirit. Once the continuity is interrupted the consecration is gone. More peaceable people wear necklaces or bracelets of such talismans in the belief that they are thus proof against malignant witches and necromancers. Most Englishmen in Burma, who are on friendly terms with the people, have been asked to test the virtue of such a charm, by firing at it tied up in a handkerchief. If the incantation is valid the handkerchief will be unharmed, though the muzzle of the pistol be held up to it. In such a case the pistol will burst.

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Another kind of tattooing is the mwe se, which guards against danger from snake bite. Similarly the a-kwè a-kyan, the shielding, or defending drug, renders harmless the spells of wizards and geomancers, and keeps far away evil spirits of every kind. But the most hideous and weird of the superstitions about tattooing is that connected with the a-kyan se. There are but very few sayās who are acquainted with the necessary drugs and incantations, and fewer people still who have the courage to submit to the operation, for many men are pointed out whose minds have given way under the gruesome process, and who wander about graveyards, gnashing their teeth and fumbling about for human bones to gnaw and mouth. And no wonder, for some tattooers make them chew the raw flesh of a man who has been hanged, while the figure is being tattooed on the breast. Those who go through the operation are called Baw-di-tha-da. Some become Baw-di-tha-da without knowing it, and without the sickening necessity of mumbling human flesh like a ghoul. I knew an instance in a monastery. The patient was a boarder about fourteen years of age. A Shan tattooer wandering about the country spent a couple of nights in the kyaung, and the boy, attracted by the fellow's eerie tales, managed to save up a good many titbits for him from the food going in the monastery. Out of gratitude, and having nothing better to give him, for he was very poor and homeless, the sayā tattooed on the lad a figure with singular drugs, muttering queer phrases the while. Then he went away saying no more than that it would make the boy very strong. In about a month's time the boarder displayed unmistakable signs of being a Baw-di-tha-da. He

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leapt enormous heights in the air, jumped about and ran at random, carried with the utmost ease things which no one else could move. The abbot locked him up in a sadaik, the box in which the palm-leaf manuscripts were kept; he got out without injuring the lock in any way, sprang on to the roof of the monastery, forty feet high, and turned a somersault to the ground without hurting himself in the least. He had been a boy of very soft, easy temper, and now he became fiery and uncertain, and with his vast strength, very dangerous. He only calmed down when a monk preached the law to him. He was constantly doing marvellous things; one day he walked across the river in front of the monastery, holding a monk's ôk, or food vessel, in his hands. The depth of the water was over six fathoms, but it did not reach higher than his waist. On another occasion a tree which was being cut down fell on him. He sank into the ground and came forth quite uninjured. After some years his parents took him to Magwe in Upper Burma. There he fell into bad courses and became a dacoit. This was terrible for his family in a special way, because in native territory if they cannot catch the dacoit [681] they seize all his friends and relations and put them in jail till they can get hold of the real culprit, and no one can lay hands on a Baw-di-tha-da. At last, however, he was restored to his right mind. A holy ascetic came across him, soothed him with the payeit gyi, and then with a rusty nail and [792] sacred medicines, tattooed out the figure put on with such lamentable results by the Shan sayā. The quondam Baw-di-tha-da is now a staid and respected broker in the employ of one of the best-known English rice firms in Rangoon. He was fortunate; most Baw-di-tha-das have to be killed in their sleep.

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But though Baw-di-tha-das are very rare, charmed tattooing is not, and there are some fast young men who seem almost to make picture galleries of themselves with emblems and patterns all over their chests, arms, backs, and the ·lves of their legs. The colour gradually dies away until ; last nothing remains but the blue breeches. These really lo k well, and they last a man to his dying day.

The following recipes and formulæ to be repeated

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certain stones called amadé, said to be found in the heads of birds, in trees, and in animals, are highly prized as amulets. They will guard from musket shots, or sword thrusts, from painful blows, or evil spirits. Hmaw sayās always have them. When they are placed on a child's face, or introduced into any one's blood, nat thwin thi, they introduce a spirit. The person so possessed falls into a trance, and may be questioned as to the doings of any other evil spirits in the neighbourhood.

Letters, placed in the magic squares and triangular "in" are la-gyi, na-gyi, ka-gyi, ga-gyi (great *l*, great *n*, great *k*, and great *g*). Other very powerful s'ma, as these tattooed letters are called, are "round" sa, wa, la, and "bottom-indented" da. The arm is a favourite place for them.

The belief of every Burman in the efficacy of these tattooed charms is practically ineradicable. In 1881, in Rangoon, a young man had the figure of the great Peguan byaing, the "paddy-bird," a species of egret, tattooed upon him. This was to be as efficacious in preserving him from drowning as a child's caul used to be considered by British sailors. When it was finished, he suggested that an immediate experiment should be made. Accordingly his hands and feet were tied, and he was tossed over the side of a boat into the river. The under-currents in the Rangoon river are very dangerous, and the poor fellow was never seen again. The tattooers, master and assistant, were brought up on a charge of murder, and convicted of manslaughter, but the great mass of the Burman population thought they were very hardly treated, and that the fact of an unlucky side-wind, some mischance in the calculation from the horoscope, the machinations of an evil-disposed person against the deceased, or something of that kind, which had caused the lamentable issue, ought never to have led to the conviction of the skilled sayās. That they were charlatans was never once hinted.

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the monks are perhaps

276 792 the most persistent chewers of the good betel. Smoking is prohibited, but nothing is said against betel, and it is considered a great stimulator of the meditative faculties. The lime used very speedily corrodes and destroys the teeth, and then the old pôngyi has to make the scholars crush up the nuts so that they may not hurt his toothless gums. It is a common belief that no one can speak Burmese well till he chews betel. Demosthenes is said to have put pebbles in his mouth when he was practising oratory.

517 515 302 Alternate smoking, chewing, and conversation serve to pass the day, and after dinner, when the sun goes down, our villager has a bath down by the well to freshen him up. The water is drawn up in a bucket and simply poured over the body. Soap is never used, and particular care is taken not to wet the hair. The head washing is a special ceremony, to be gone through only occasionally, and then with circumspection. Dandies, as a rule, put a solution of rice and water on their hair every day to make it grow long, and cocoanut oil is also very generally used. Both sexes are proud of the length of their hair, and it is not uncommon to see it reaching below the knee and down to the ankles. The men wear it in a yaung or knot on the top of the head, while the sadôn of the women is at the back of the head. Both men and women are in the habit of adding to its size by interweaving false tresses, which are easily got, seeing that everybody has black hair, and that some young member of the family is constantly getting his locks cut off on his entry into the monastery. There is no more sense of shame in using false hair than there is in improving the appearance by wearing fine clothes. At his bath it is usual for a pious person to repeat a Pali charm over the first bucket of water, which is then slowly poured over the body. The object of this is to guard against sickness.

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517 514 291 After bathing, the Burman, if he is young, usually puts on his fine clothes, for except in the rainy season there is sure to be a dramatic performance, or a yein dance by the village lads and lasses, or an entertainment of some kind going on at some house in the village. The dress is very simple and picturesque. The paso is a long silk cloth, fifteen cubits long and about two and a half wide. It is

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—no doubt owing to the diversion of mind produced by banging away on the top of your roof, and the confidence and hope which the operation induces. Moreover, so much damage is done to the house itself that repairs take some time, which also serves to keep the mind occupied.

When the thayè tôpthi is over, the people return to their houses, where the pots with their consecrated contents are. The yellow string is unwound from the sticks and divided into lengths. Some people hang it all round the eaves of the house in little bags, others tie pieces of it round the left wrist, more especially those who go about much. At a time when there is cholera about, most of the young men may be seen with these wristlets. A Rangoon clerk detected wearing one colours with annoyance, and says his parents made him put it on. He very probably throws it away, but the same night he will have a fresh piece on. The thread is coloured with dye obtained from the wood of the jack-tree, the same which supplies the colouring matter for the monkish garments. The thabye bin leaves are kept in the pot, or scattered about the house. The tree is particularly highly esteemed by the Burmese. A species of it, the thabu thabye bin (the Malay apple, *Eugenia malaccensis*), is celebrated as the largest tree in the island which lies to the south of Mount Myinmo. Sprigs and leaves of the thabye bin are cut, prayers and supplications for absent friends and relatives offered up before them, and then the twig is thrown into a pot of water. A song has been composed about the tree itself, and is one of the most popular of those that do not belong to the category of love-songs. The jester in a play has always an unfailing draw when, wishing to testify his regard for some one, he declares he has cut down an entire thabye bin and thrown it into the river that his friend may enjoy good health. The joke lies in the contrast between this and the couple of leaves in a small pot used by people ordinarily.

It might have been expected that contact with English civilisation and doctors would have put an end to the riotous absurdity of the thayè tôpthi; but it has not by any means. In fact the house-beating goes on more vigorously in Rangoon and the larger district towns than elsewhere. This is

of milk. She is not permitted to read, sew, or to do anything that will 'arouse or stir the blood.' 846

Omens are read from the position of mongoloid spots on the newborn baby's body. They are said to represent marks put on in a previous existence and their presence proves that the child was then a human being. A blue spot on the foot presages a life of travel. Any marks leading from the right shoulder to the left hip, the line that the royal riband takes, traditionally indicated a royal future; today, however, in the absence of royalty in Burma, such marks merely forecast a 'great' future for the child. 787 845

A child is constantly watched from the time of birth for signs of whose reincarnation it represents. This is a constant topic in the family conversations. 775

Any disfigurement in a newborn child is regarded as a carry-over of the parents' store of demerit, as well as the child's, from earlier existences. It is regarded with a sense of shame and sorrow.

Although multiple births are neither preferred nor desired, they are not looked upon with any marked anxiety nor are there any supernatural means employed to prevent them. 854 751

A number of things are done by parents to protect the newborn baby from malevolent influences. Before it is a month old, a tiger bone should be ground on a stone, together with a little water, and mixed with honey. This is fed to the child to ward off a mysterious infant illness associated with the tiger. A connection is believed to exist between the tiger and convulsions; some parents place a tiger skin under the mattress of the baby's bed to guard against such illness. A knife similarly placed is said to protect against illness in general.

To insure good health and well-being for the child, a white thread over which certain prayers have been recited may be given by a Buddhist monk and tied around the baby's wrists. People should refrain from making admiring remarks about a baby's growth; if they do so, the thread may be left on the baby's wrists to neutralize the harm that may come.

When the stump of the child's umbilical cord has dried and fallen off, it is kept and used as a medicine for any illness that befalls the child. A little of it is ground up and mixed with water for such purposes. [846]

A very close connection is believed to exist between mother and child during the nursing period. Certain observances are necessary. The mother must not eat tomatoes at this time, for they may appear in the baby's stools; for the same reason, she must abstain from green vegetables. Any falling out of her hair during the nursing stage is said to be caused by bubbles blown into her by the suckling baby. To prevent the milk supply from drying up, the nursing mother avoids fruits of astringent quality, such as pomegranates and buds of the banyan. She must also take care not to allow milk to fall on the floor and dry. 853

The baby is weaned very gradually, beginning at the age of about nine months to a year in most cases, although some children may be given the breast occasionally up to the age of two or three years. Weaning is facilitated by the mother's application of a bitter substance to her breasts. 862

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1893 AP1 Burma
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721 634 threatened, of how he was sure they would murder him some time, because he had joined us. 'They are sure to kill me some time,' he said. He seemed sad and depressed, not afraid.

So we talked on, and I asked him about charms. 'Are there not charms that will prevent you being hurt if you are hit, and that will not allow a sword to cut you? We hear of invulnerable men. There were the Immortals of the King's Guard, for instance.'

721 751 And he said, yes, there were charms, but no one believed in them except the villagers. He did not, nor did men of education. Of course, the ignorant people believed in them. There were several sorts of charms. You could be tattooed with certain mystic letters that were said to insure you against being hit, and there were certain medicines you could drink. There were also charms made out of stone, such as a little tortoise he had once seen that was said to protect its wearer. There were mysterious writings on palm-leaves. There were men, he said vaguely, who knew how to make these things. For himself, he did not believe in them.

779 751 I tried to learn from him then, and I have tried from others since, whether these charms have any connection with Buddhism. I cannot find that they have. They are never in the form of images of the Buddha, or of extracts from the sacred writings. There is not, so far as I can make out, any religious significance in these charms; mostly they are simply mysterious. I never heard that the people connect them with their religion. Indeed, all forms of enchantment and of charms are most strictly prohibited.

304 The custom is dying out today; but, in the villages, the teen-age boy
562 frequently, on the encouragement of their family submit to the tattoo-
178 ing of a small area on the thigh. These decorations seen when the longyis are wrapped high were regarded as essential and those without them were openly criticised.

[751] A second type of tattooing consisting of potent symbols were, as still are, placed on the inner arm, back, or high forehead as a means of magical protection against harm. Snake, knife, cudgel and bullet proof motifs are common. Young girls frequently have the inner arm tattooed with such a charm.

838 Homo-sexuals are known as MEIN MA SHA ("woman-half") and are
826 recognised by their effeminate gestures, "pretty" locks and clothing. They frequently wear THANAKHA face powder, tie their longyis in a simple tucked-in fold, and wear jewelry like the women. They are rare in villages but have banded together into a society in Rangoon. They appear to be tolerated but are scorned.

It is believed that individuals known as MEIN-THE-PON-LAIN-MEIN-PON-LAIN ("Female sex- 2 sexes") exist . These persons are supposed to be alternately a man for one month, and a woman for the following [775] month in a complete process of transformation. Both the MEIN MA SHA and these individuals result from illicit seduction activities in a previous existence - the MEIN MA SHA being the less sinful of the two

792 The PONGYI dress consist of orange cotton cloth - one garment
291 being a longyi with a folded tie at the waist; the other a wide band
293 draped as a robe. When begging the PONGYIS have a special arrangement of the robe which wraps the left arm and covers the neck region. The nuns wear a robe garment over a long sleeved KINGYI jacket of the same colour. They are frequently seen with a scarf folded on the head. Both orders carry orange-cloth (lacquered) parasols on long bamboo shafts, a string of beads and large palm leaf fans. The Pongyis carry leather bags suspended on a shoulder strap for personal effects. PONGYI slippers have a square toe, are made of stiff leather with reinforced soles.

[887] Religious women (including old women) wear chocolate coloured HTAMEINS, KINGYIS and carry a PUNA (a narrow scarf 4 of 5 feet in

Analysis

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The main active preventative measures are those of cleaning the body and the clothes. The Burmese seem to be fastidious in this regard. The boiling of water and food is a similar measure. However, there does not seem to be much concern with communal sanitary measures as practical in western countries. It is difficult to see a real difference in the standard of preventative measures in Camp as opposed to Pathee. In effect, the individual standards are maintained and the communal ones remain as negative as previously.

The medical record as given by the family, though open to question as to accuracy in coming from laymen, does indicate a high incident of communicable diseases and apparent lack of deficiency disorders. The low incident of dysentery is surprising, but may not be accepted without question. The high incident of piles is interesting in suggesting a cultural disorder perhaps organically tied to the constant squat position. There appeared to be a greater incident of eyesores, chlis, and skin diseases in the refugee camp - perhaps as a result of greater crowding in the the urban situation. Certainly the dust of Rangoon is an active hazard in this regard.

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Most of the family's medical care has been that of Burmese practitioners. Only 3 cases was western medicine used, and in two of these Burmese remedies were also used. Dr. Sheppard, ECA medical advisor, and Ko Mya Tu interviewed U Myaing for the purpose of finding out his reactions to western medicine. His increased contact with modern medicine in Rangoon has had an effect on his thought as seen in the interview below:

> U Myaing said: "In our practical experience we find that western medicine is more efficacious (than native Burmese medicine). I remember the woman whom you (Ko Mya Tu) came and gave injections to. She recovered at once and is now hale and hearty - the woman who lives in the shed near our place (in the refugee camp). She was stricken with dysentery. She was suffering from 11 o'clock at night till morning, when an ambulance was summoned by telephone to take her to the hospital. She was given injections and by noon she was feeling very much better. Burmese doctors take much longer. Some of them mix in western medicines with their own. If we were given the choice we would prefer western medicine because it takes effect quicker..I have seen one case of Burmese medicine succeeding where western medicine failed. This was a case of urinary trouble."

753 The concept of KARMA (fate) is important only in determining
777 the general well-being of the individual, as seen in Daw Aw Zar's
262 belief that her general good health was due to a morally-lived previous existence. "It is like a shadow". Some specific situations like being born blind is attributed to ones KARMA - in this case the person had been a notorious fighter of cocks in the previous existence; cocks being frequently blinded in the fights.

Each person is regarded as subject to some special disorder or weakness such as being especially subject to colds or headaches, or stomach troubles. Collectively these are referred to as "age-group" weaknesses. (MIYAT - girls' weakness; DULAH - boys' weaknesses.) But this is due to childhood illnesses and neglect of early troubles rather than KARMA. Persons with the weaknesses noted above avoid cucumbers (a "cold" vegetable), or hot foods including liquor (these cause greater heat to rise to the head), or green or raw vegetables (hard to digest). The choice of the correct diet to suit one's particular condition is important.

●751 Bodily exercise is a prime consideration for health. Calli-
526 thenics or sports for this purpose are unknown or unrecognized and by
461 " healthful exercise " is meant everyday work activities. Regular
757 daily motion is regarded as necessary for health, and a purgative is
514 taken regularly once a month. The idea is to " clean out disease ". Purgatives are taken first in most sicknesses. This is followed by drinking preparations in hot water to induce perspiration along with woolen blankets. The colour of the urine is checked "daily" since a too yellow colour indicates an unhealthy condition. If so - one must drink additional quantities of water and coconut water. "Urine takes the place of perspiration in cold weather". Over-working and lack of sleep also can lead to unhealthiness. The ideal
[593] sleep period is from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. with a nap thrown in from 12 to 2 after "breakfast".

158 Too much worrying SAY.T.UNG.JO.KOJEH (mind-beating-because-
753 body-crush) leads to sickness. This is a common problem for mothers who worry about their children's futures. It results in THEHJEH-PYEYEH (small black bitter (gall)-disorder) where the gall fluid is

recognised as over-stimulated by anxieties. "Don't talk my gall into disorder" is a common reaction to calamity tales. 158 753

The weather is important is maintaining health. Changeable weather as during the late part of the Monsoon season is generally unhealthy and gives rise to pulmonary disorders. One should provide head protection (through covering or shade from umbrella) from the sun's rays - which cause headaches by melting the brain. Colds come from getting wet in the rain resulting from the lack of sufficient bodily heat. MIEH HNGME (earth-vapour) which rises as a steam in the early morning or after sudden rains is unhealthful in causing sore eyes and other inflamations. The"steam of the body" healthfully goes out in ordinary bathing and adds to one's comfort. Heat is a key factor in health and sickness being readily discerned as causes of local or general infection. The additional concept of "like producing like" helps explain the above beliefs. 753 132

The odor of AH HNYAW (fried food) is especially dangerous to babies and persons in a weakened condition. When frying, which will create extensive fumes, is to be undertaken the cook must give warning to the neighbourhood so that susceptible ones can be protected. Such persons take refuge behind the thick, cloth mosquito nets. Many heated arguments take place in our servants' quarters when the Indian fried food fumes carry over to the Burmese apartments. It is observed that this danger applies peculiarly to the Burmese - Chinese are also exempt since they are seem to cook with babies strapped on their backs. [252] [186]

Parts of the body are cared for with special ingredients. The eyes are cleaned with pure water or coconut water. Oil is frequently dropped into the ears through a feather quill. The mouth and teeth are cleaned with salt. Bitter foods keep keep the stomach fit. 515 751

Babies up to 1 year are fed on mother's milk or cow's milk. After one, rice chewed by the mother "to make it digestible" is added with some dried fish. After two, the child can chew its own rice, have a little meat, but no hot condiments. After five the child eats the same foods as the adults but is not allowed sour foods as this will "lessen the weight". After 16 or 17, this restriction is 853 561 262

776 of the villagers. The head-nat, the guardian of the village, replies
753 with accusations that "the whole village has forgotten me", boasts of
688 his powers to punish and is finally mollified. In Rangoon there are
672 professional nat-givers who parade the streets with a cart bearing the
782 image of "the conquerer of the salty waters" (special nat of entrepre-
[463] neurs). For a few annas he will make offerings to the nat and relcive the busy townspeople of this task.

776 The arrangement is a mutual one where the people enjoy freedom
782 from oppressions in return for certain concessions. This phenomenon closely parallels the traditional relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Burma. In a real sense the nat concept serves the function of allowing the Burmese a sense of control over catastrophic forces which do not fall into any other system (as secular, political, personal relationships, cosmology.). It is this system of controls [177] that the western scientific system most immediately competes with. The administrative and entrepreneur class of Burmese especially in Rangoon say they "Do not believe"in nats. But it is usual for most individuals no matter what their western background to apply to nats in cases of ill fortune "just in case".

775 THAYEE (Ghosts) generally are a group of supernatural spirits closely related to nats in their origins but with a different set of properties. These are "recently" deceased individuals whose crimes and sins while on earth or manner of death condemn them to an eternity of wandering and mischief-making. Actually, each person becomes a ghost at death but is ordinarily released from earth at the moment of the interment of the corpse for judgment in heaven. Those who die of [761] "raw death" become ghosts. These include: death in childbirth, by wild animals (especially tigers), instant deaths by dahs as in warfare, or by hanging. In Maung Maung Than's village a prominent ghost is U Ne Gyi (Mr. Blacky) a very sinful fellow who lived 50 or 60 years ago in the village. His complexion is quite black and horribly distorted. He inhabits a banyan tree and specializes in causing infant illness. Offerings of rice at the tree pacifies him. Ghosts are forces for evil only - evil of the more irritating and less important kind.
●751 Older people wear red and white coloured strings about their necks as a protection against ghost evils. It is very common to wear a LET-PWET

(arm-tie) charm consisting of a small metal tube bound about the upper arm or neck and containing an inscription written by a pongyi on silver or aluminum foil. Once a year, after new years (in March), a PAYA-YUDA (prayer-recite) ceremony is held. At this time pongyis recite the precepts of Buddha for the benefit of the ghosts - who "become hot and run away". Younger people, especially children, are susceptible to being possessed by ghosts. At this time they "throw fits" and are uncontrolable. Under the supervision of a pongyi the ghost is cast out by means of threats and beatings administered to the person of the possessed one. Beatings are severe and continuous often lasting an hour, until the ghost says he is "afraid" and departs. The possessed one, thus cured, does not later complain of rough treatment since this is borne by the invading ghost. Perhaps this relates to the less formulated, "nameless horrors" of unseen and unaccountable forces that cause otherwise unexplainable events - which concept pervades much of western thought to this day.

A major difference between nats and ghosts is that ghosts cause only harm while nats are ordinarily beneficial in the manner described above. Ghosts may also be controlled for evil purposes against individuals in a variety of black magic. The specialists in black magic are PAH-YOH-GA-SAYA (influence-masters) of black magic or "lower root", (hell-evil), who administer the evil influence. Witches also have personal magic powers that allow them to cause harm to an individual by introducing foreign matter such as lumps of meat, hair balls, into the body of the victim. It is never known for sure who the witches are but old women of peculiar habits, and especially of the fishermen's group, are suspected. Such individuals are considered generally malivalent and special procautions are needed to avoid offending them. The influence masters, however, are well known and receive gift-fees for performing services either of causing or controlling black magic influences. Both groups, but especially the influence masters of the lower root control ghosts for their purposes.

- "upper root" (heaven) masters combat the "lower root evil"

A major means of securing control of a ghost or "ghost-rearing" is to get the finger bone of a recently deceased person who died a "raw death". Incantations said over the bone insures the obedience of

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536* 534 462 463 part, although there was no stage convention preventing women from taking it up as a vocation. The head of the orchestra was also the head of the troupe. He was the most learned and experienced member, and he was responsible for the organization and financial outlay, paying more or less fixed wages to the others, and taking the profits himself. When engaged for a performance, the troupe was paid by public subscription or by some philanthropic person, usually an official, and therefore no charge for admission was made, all being [565] welcome to it. The Burmese actors as a class, unlike their Elizabethan counterparts who could endow a College of God's Gift or buy a coat-of-arms, were poor. But they never starved, for even the poorest villages would welcome and feed them on their wanderings all over the country. The troupe was one large family, and the children of the members accompanied it. In spite of the prejudice against them and their poverty, the actors loved their art, and enjoyed the performances themselves.

536* There were many conventions connected with the stage, and they can be divided into two classes: those imposed on the actors by themselves, and those imposed by the fear of becoming unpopular with the audience.

795 536* The actors never forgot that they were originally spirit-dancers, and therefore they had conventions by which they showed their indebtedness to spirit worship. Before the performance offerings of food were made to the thirty-seven *nats*. As a curtain-raiser, there was a performance by a dancer or chorus of dancers. Each wore a red [533] cloth round the head—the sign of a spirit worshipper. Singing invocations to the *nats* and dancing the appropriate dances, they asked for protection by the spirits, while the orchestra played a bar from each [751] of the thirty-seven *nat* tunes. It was supposed that if this convention was broken, disaster would befall the troupe, the performance would prove a failure, and the actors would become mad; but often these conventions had been known to be broken, accidentally or otherwise.

536* 463 554 [779] The actors were looked upon as irreligious and immoral, and on the slightest excuse, they were in danger of being considered profane. Therefore, as has been stated, they took over the conventions from the *Nibhathkhin*. The Buddha was never impersonated, and an *arahat* or saint only when absolutely necessary, and then by an able and 'serious' actor, who had to keep a fast that day. Not even a mild joke was to be made against the Buddha or an *arahat*, although even monks and the religion itself could be the butt of a clown's wit. But

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* 539* a man, I am a prince of valour. I must not be afraid. Come on, lad, care not for guns and swords and spears. Jump over the wall, risk your life. Do and dare. Steel yourself. My lord of the orchestra, play me a short encouragement to climb the wall.

[*The orchestra plays and stops.*]

KING. That man has some valour and some strength. He is trying to scale the wall. He is a nightman, a robber, a thief. If he is brave, I will be brave too. I will capture him single-handed, without using any weapon. As wax is subdued by fire, our friend of the night will be subdued by his king. My lord of the orchestra, make ready to help me, the king. [*The orchestra plays and stops.*]

PARPAHEIN. Come on, friend, scale this fort. Jump on to the wall. [751] Though it is high and well-guarded with spikes and all, I have the ability to negotiate it. I have a magic needle in my arm, I have on me the neck of a wild bird, the hair of a cockroach, the wing of a peacock, the intestines of a cat, the right arm of an alchemist who died in his laboratory just as he was going to become a *zawgyee*, a multi-coloured pumpkin. I have on my body tattooed pictures of a monkey, a lizard, and an ogre. They will help me to conquer this mighty wall.[1] O master of the orchestra, make ready to help me to win. [*The orchestra plays and stops.*]

KING. That person probably possesses some charm to be able to climb the wall. Well, the might of a king's body can match any charm. I will conquer him without any weapon, with my right arm only. My lord of the orchestra, help me to follow him.

met the king, proclaimed him hero; it came out at the trial that all the proceeds of the raids were spent wholly on the poor and in building pagodas; he and the king had learnt to admire each other, as during the raids they risked their lives together many a time; his cynical sense of humour, his respectful but fearless demeanour at the trial—all these factors combined together to win him his pardon. He later became a minister and led many warlike expeditions, and was much loved and respected.

The reference results in dramatic irony, for Parpahein does not realize that he is more like Ngatetpya than he imagines as he also is going to meet the king in disguise.

[1] All charms supposed to give their possessor great physical strength, and make him immune from injury.

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, 1-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

quite frequently help in rearing their grandchildren, telling them stories and teaching them the Buddhist scriptures. 603

THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Birth and Infancy. When a woman is pregnant her dreams are considered especially significant. She is expected to remember those of her dreams that concern what her child will be like. The welfare of the child is forecast by some dreams: a dream of only one of things that normally are paired, such as earrings, bodes ill, possibly death, of the child in infancy; a dream of her viscera coming out indicates a great future for the child. Persistent dreams of a particular deceased individual are indicative of whose reincarnation the child will represent. In all forebodings of ill the normal counter-measure is to consult a Buddhist monk or an astrologer, who may give the prospective mother an inscribed *mantra* (prayer) to keep or some amulet for the child to wear as protection. 843 787 [751]

Although the Burmese woman need not avoid any specific foods during her pregnancy, strong spices are regarded as harmful. [262]

No supernatural means are employed to influence the sex of the prospective offspring. Certain signs are considered prognosticative: if the pregant woman's stomach is pointed, a boy will be born, whereas a broad, flat stomach indicates a girl is in prospect.

Pregnancy among the Burmese is considered a time of great happiness; the woman is greatly indulged and pampered by all concerned.

When the time for delivery approaches any other pregnant women in the household must depart, lest their presence impede labor. Usually the woman's mother, grandmother, or aunt, in addition to a midwife, assists at birth. A fire is prepared in the room in which delivery is to take place and is maintained for ten days. 844

As soon as delivery has occurred, the umbilical cord is cut with a bamboo knife. The afterbirth is wrapped in the new mother's skirt and is buried at once in the cardinal direction associated with the day of the week of the baby's birth. The mother is fed an infusion of turmeric, and turmeric paste is rubbed all over her body. She is kept close to the nearby fire and made very warm. For three days she is carefully watched to prevent her from sleeping heavily in daylight hours. 846

The new mother is treated as a delicate invalid for about a month and, in some cases, for as long as three months. She is fed only white rice and dried fish. A soup of garlic and banana stems is drunk to promote the flow of milk. She is not permitted to read, sew, or to do anything that will "arouse or stir the blood." [262] [853]

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

787 826 Omens are read from the position of mongoloid spots on the newborn baby's body. They are said to represent marks put on in a previous existence and their presence proves the child was then a human being. A blue spot on the foot presages a life of travel. Any marks leading from the right shoulder to the left hip, the line that the royal riband takes, indicate a royal future; today, however, with no royalty in Burmese society, such marks merely forecast a "great" future for the child.

775 826 A child is constantly watched from the time of birth for signs of whose reincarnation it represents. This is a constant topic in the family conversations.

Any disfigurement in a newborn child is regarded as a carry-over of the parents' store of demerit, as well as that of the child, from previous existences. It is regarded with a sense of shame and sorrow.

845 Although multiple births are neither preferred nor desired, they are not looked upon with any marked anxiety nor are there any supernatural means employed to prevent them.

766 In the event of a stillborn baby, the corpse is given special treatment. It is kept in a case, clothed and powdered, and a tray of food is set in front of it every day. It is considered auspicious to care for a stillborn child in this manner: the spirits will guide the parents in their dreams toward the attainment of material prosperity.

751 854 [825] [753] For the normal baby who survives, a number of things are done by Burmese parents to protect it from malevolent influences. Before it is a month old, a tiger bone is ground on a stone, together with a little water, and mixed with honey. This is fed to the child to ward off a mysterious infant illness associated with the tiger. A connection is believed to exist between the tiger and convulsions; some parents place a tiger skin under the mattress of the baby's bed to guard against such illness. A knife placed under the baby's mattress is said to protect against illness in general.

To insure good health and well-being for the child, a white thread over which certain *mantras* have been recited may be given by a Buddhist monk and tied around the baby's wrists. Should a baby be admired by people for its growth, the thread may be left on to neutralize the harm that is believed to result from such expressions.

[278] When the child's umbilical cord has dried and fallen off, it is kept and used as a medicine for any illness that befalls the child. A little of it is ground up and mixed with water for such purposes.

000 A very close connection is believed to exist between mother and child during

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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next to a parent, with a life-long devotion.

Before or after the monastic novitiate, it is the custom for the Burman lads to have themselves tattooed from the waist to the knee (No. 152). Not to submit to this ordeal is to incur the reproach of cowardice. The tattooing is an intricate pattern of animals and tracery. Owing to the extent of surface involved, the process is most painful. It occupies days or weeks, according to the fortitude of the subject, who is drugged with opium for the occasion. The instrument has a handle weighted at the butt, and a long point of bronze, split like a ruling-pen. It is worked with great rapidity. The pigment is a kind of lamp-black of the consistence of ink. It shows bluish black through the brown skin. When a Burman tucks up his loin-cloth, as he always does for work or exercise (*kaddung-chait*), he looks as if he had black knee-breeches. As plain as the contrast is to the eye, ordinary photographic plates fail to render it. In No. 153 it appears fully. On other parts of the body the men frequently have horoscopes and cabalistic diagrams tattooed with vermilion (*so-at*, No. 162) for luck and bravado. The Shan practice of letting in gold and silver discs the size of two-penny pieces—beneath the skin—is sometimes imitated by Burmans as a charm against sword-cuts and bullets (*dahbyi*; *thwaddyi*). The Arakanese, who repudiate the custom of *tigwin*, ascribe it to a Burman King, who endeavoured to disguise his leprosy in this way.

87. VILLAGE LAY SCHOOL.

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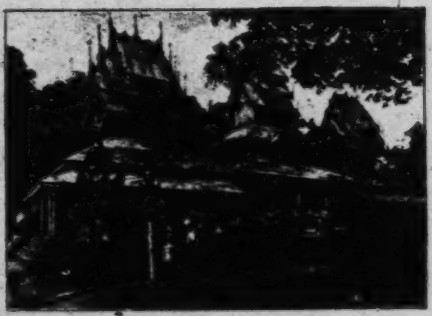
88. BUDDHIST

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4



288. KOTHENA YON (p. 191).

of the unsuccessfully vaccinated caught the disease, and ten of them died. None of the forty-four were attacked. These statistics could be multiplied. The medicine-dealers keep many of the crude commercial drugs, besides simples of their own collecting. Of the former, the principal are aloes, jalap, croton-seed, senna, bitter barks, catechu, opium, camphor, ginger, cardamom and other aromatics. The medicinal use of castor-oil is not known, though the plant is common. Spirits are now used medicinally. Many of the vegetable remedies are almost inert (see *The Burmese, what do they know of medicine?* by Dr. D. H. Cullimore). But there is one that deserves to be known, namely, the Shan remedy for tape-worm, *thsé*, which is both effectual and mild. Among the mineral drugs are mercury, calomel, sulphur, blue and green vitriols, alum, salammoniac, nitre. There is a whole category of supposititious remedies, tiger's gall, rhinoceros' blood, ant-eater's scales, and so forth; they are charred before being made up. Allied to this class of remedies is that of charms, the vendors of which (nat-wives—*nakhaddw*) trade on the superstition that disease is caused by demons. Every patient will be as particular to mention his star as to describe his complaint. He will be advised to avoid certain classes of remedies on certain days. The "Sunday son" must not purge on Friday, and so on. In times of epidemic and panic, *thlòhnzali* are erected at every house, as they likewise are in cases of sickness (No. 431). They are merely of sand, held together with circles of bast. Sometimes they are erected to avert calamity declared to be impending in a *zkwgo-hlwdaw*, a message on gold foil dropped from heaven by a *Thadyd* (p. 186). Images are dedicated

291. CHILDREN'S BAZAR (p. 192).